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ABSTRACT

The Chicago Mastery Learning Reading (CMLR) program provides a model of instruction and a set of instructional materials for teachers and students, from kindergarten through eighth grade, in Chicago Public Schools. An analysis of CMLR progress records for more than 240,000 students in June 1983, found that compared to 1982 and earlier years, (1) more students were working on CMLR materials at their organizational grade or above; (2) more students in each grade had mastered the CMLR material for their organizational level or above; and (3) as a result of more students working on CMLR objectives appropriate for their grade level, the percentage of students mastering a year's worth of material declined slightly. (Author/KH)

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CHICAGO MASTERY LEARNING
READING PROGRESS REPORT
1982-1983 SCHOOL YEAR

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Chicago Public Schools

Ruth B. Love
General Superintendent of Schools

January 1984

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chicago Mastery Learning Reading program (CMLR) is a model of instruction and a set of instructional materials for students and teachers for kindergarten through eighth grade. The program at each grade level is self-contained, with teacher and student materials, as well as a recordkeeping and management system.

Analysis of CMLR progress records from more than 240,000 students in June 1983 produced the following findings:

- At the end of the school year, more students in 1983 than in 1982 were working on CMLR materials at their organizational grade or above.

  --85.8 percent of the students were working on CMLR materials at or above the level expected for their organizational grade in 1983, compared to 74.1 percent of the students in 1982.

  --In 1983, the proportion of students working at or above the expected level for their organizational grade was higher at each grade, two and above, than in 1982.

- By the end of the school year, more students in each grade in 1983 than in 1982 had mastered the CMLR material for their organizational grade or above.

  --72.4 percent of the students mastered CMLR materials at or above the expected level for their grade in 1983, compared to 66.6 percent of the students in 1982.

  --In 1983, the proportion of students mastering CMLR materials at or above the expected level was higher at each grade, two and above, than in 1982.

- In 1983, as a result of more students working on CMLR objectives appropriate for their grade level, the percentage of students mastering a year's worth of material declined slightly.

  --The overall proportion in 1983 was 85 percent, compared to 89 percent in 1982.

  --Kindergarten and grade eight showed the greatest proportions of students making a year's progress in CMLR; grades one, pre-two, and seven, the least.

STUDENT PROGRESS IN CMLR

The Chicago Mastery Learning Reading program (CMLR) is a model of instruction and a set of instructional materials for students and teachers for kindergarten through eighth grade. This program is designed to teach and assess the key Comprehension and Word Attack/Study Skills objectives that Chicago elementary school students are expected to master in order to be promoted from one grade to the next. Two adjuncts to the program are the Vocabulary Learning Strategies books for each grade and a generic comprehension guide applying comprehension to fiction and nonfiction reading materials. The program at each grade level is self-contained, with teacher and student materials, as well as a recordkeeping and management system.

In June 1983, schools completed CMLR progress forms which called for a detailed report of the mastery learning instructional level, units completed, and units mastered for all students. More than 240,000 student records were analyzed in order to answer the following questions:

1. What proportion of the students are working on CMLR materials appropriate for their assigned grade?

2. What proportion of the students master the CMLR curriculum appropriate for their grade?

3. What proportion of the students master a year's worth of CMLR materials during the academic year?

Question 1 focuses on the instructional level at which a student is being taught. Question 2 is more stringent: it asks how many students mastered the CMLR curriculum for their assigned grade. All of the students working on a set of materials during a specific period will not complete or master them by the end of the period.

Question 3 addresses a somewhat different issue. It is not directed toward status--what level a student is working on or has mastered--but rather asks how many of the CMLR units the student completed during the academic year. Was the number of CMLR units mastered by the student during the year greater or less than what is required for a year's CMLR instruction?

While it is true that a student who mastered a year's worth of materials mastered one or another instructional level, it does not follow that the student would also have mastered the CMLR skills expected at his or her assigned grade. This is so because considerable proportions of students are being instructed at levels below their assigned grades (see Table 1). Nevertheless, knowledge of how many students master a year's worth of material is an important element in assessing the effectiveness of instruction.

TABLE 1

PROGRESS ON CMLR MATERIALS, FISCAL 1982 AND 1983

[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]
	Percent working on materials appropriate for assigned grade or higher		Percent mastering CMLR skills for assigned or higher grade		Percent mastering a year's worth of CMLR materials	
Student's assigned grade	FY 1983	FY 1982	FY 1983	FY 1982	FY 1983	FY 1982
K	100.0	100.0	94.4	93.8	94.7	93.7
1	99.4	100.0	79.3	83.3	79.9	86.6
2	96.6	87.2	82.8	79.2	86.7	90.3
3	90.3	75.9	75.3	68.1	84.3	87.8
4	83.5	72.3	68.9	63.2	82.5	86.1
5	78.0	62.9	64.9	57.8	83.1	88.2
6	75.4	56.9	62.9	53.1	84.3	89.2
7	74.7	57.3	61.2	51.9	82.7	89.0
8	74.5	55.8	63.5	52.3	89.0	91.3
Total	85.8	74.1	72.4	66.6	85.0	89.0

Note: Special education and other nongraded students are excluded from the table. Grades one and Pre-2 have been combined.

Figure 1 gives the percentages of students who were working on CMLR materials appropriate for their assigned grade or a higher one and contrasts 1983 results with those for 1982. Almost all kindergarten and first grade students work at the expected CMLR level for their grade. This proportion declined as grade increased up to grade six, then leveled off through grade eight. In 1982, close to three-quarters of the students were working on materials appropriate for their assigned (or a higher) grade. In 1983, the proportion working on level increased to 85.8 percent (see Table 1). At grade three and above, the percentages of students working at the expected level for their grade increased dramatically. For grades five through eight, the percentages of students working on level was at least 15 percentage points higher in 1983 than in 1982.

While it appears that our students are coming closer to expected CMLR instructional levels, one must also ask how many students master the CMLR materials appropriate for their assigned grade. These proportions appear in Figure 2.

In 1983, almost three-quarters of the students mastered the CMLR skills for their assigned grade, compared to only two-thirds of the students mastering skills at their assigned grade in 1982 (see the fourth and fifth columns in Table 1). Again, the proportion increased, suggesting that instruction was more effective for on-level students in 1983 than in 1982. On this measure, too, there were relatively large increases over fiscal 1982 at the upper grades. However, the proportion mastering declined as the grade increased in both years. The exception to this trend was the slight increase at grade eight.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of students making a year's growth for a year's instruction. In 1982, 89 percent of the students made a year's growth as measured by CMLR progress (see last column in Table 1). In 1983, 85 percent of the students made a year's CMLR progress. The 1983 results showed a smaller proportion of students making a year's progress for a year's instruction at every grade except kindergarten as compared to fiscal 1982.

As more students work on CMLR material appropriate for their grade level (material which may be presumed to be more difficult), the percent of students mastering a year's worth of material might be expected to decline. However, for most grades the decline from 1982 levels was small. It is also possible that better record-keeping and closer adherence to the CMLR philosophy in fiscal 1983 were the source of the decline.

Figure 1

Percent Working on CMLR Materials Appropriate for Their Grade or a Higher One

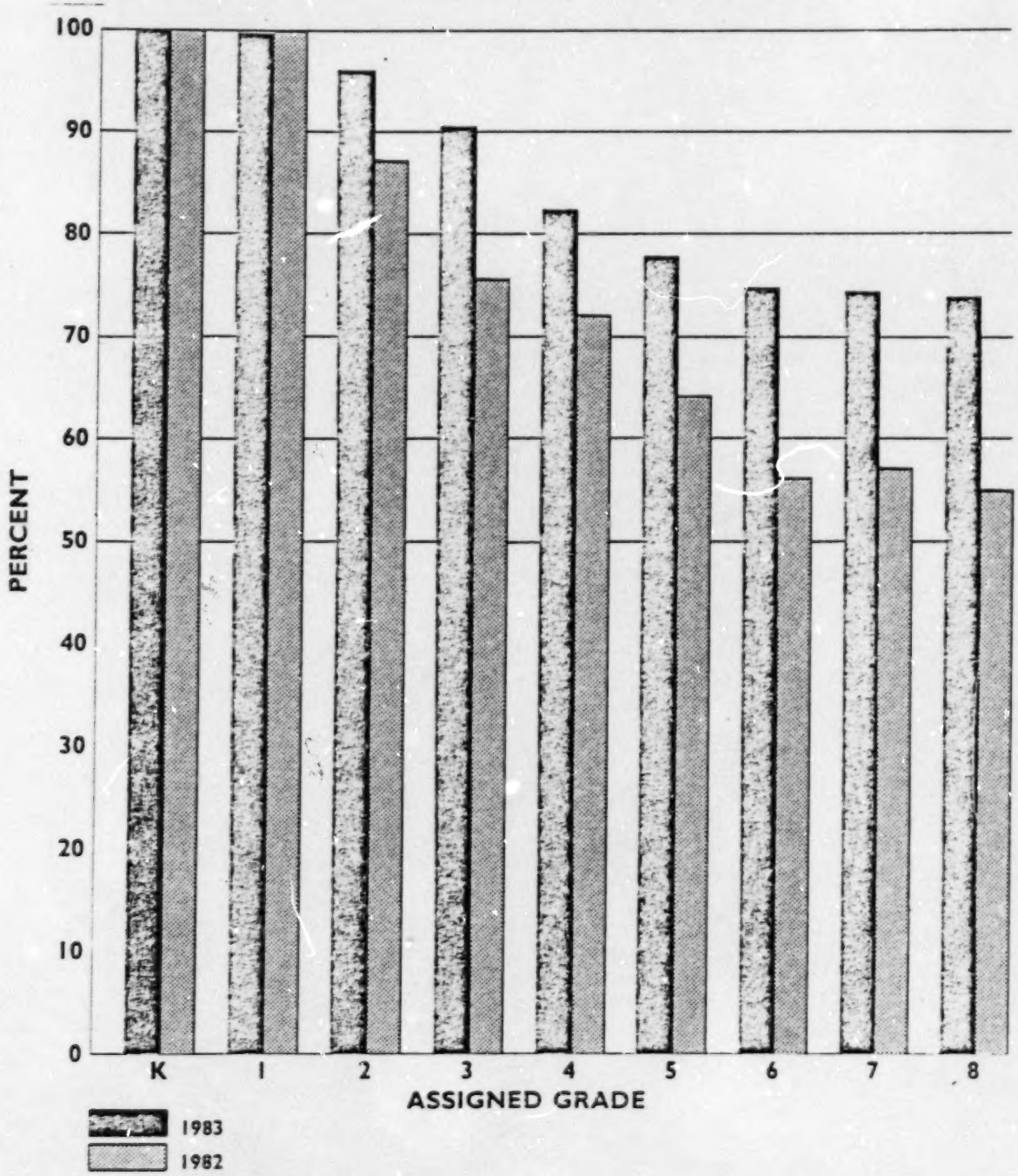


Figure 2

Percent Mastering CMLR Materials Appropriate for Their Grade or a Higher One

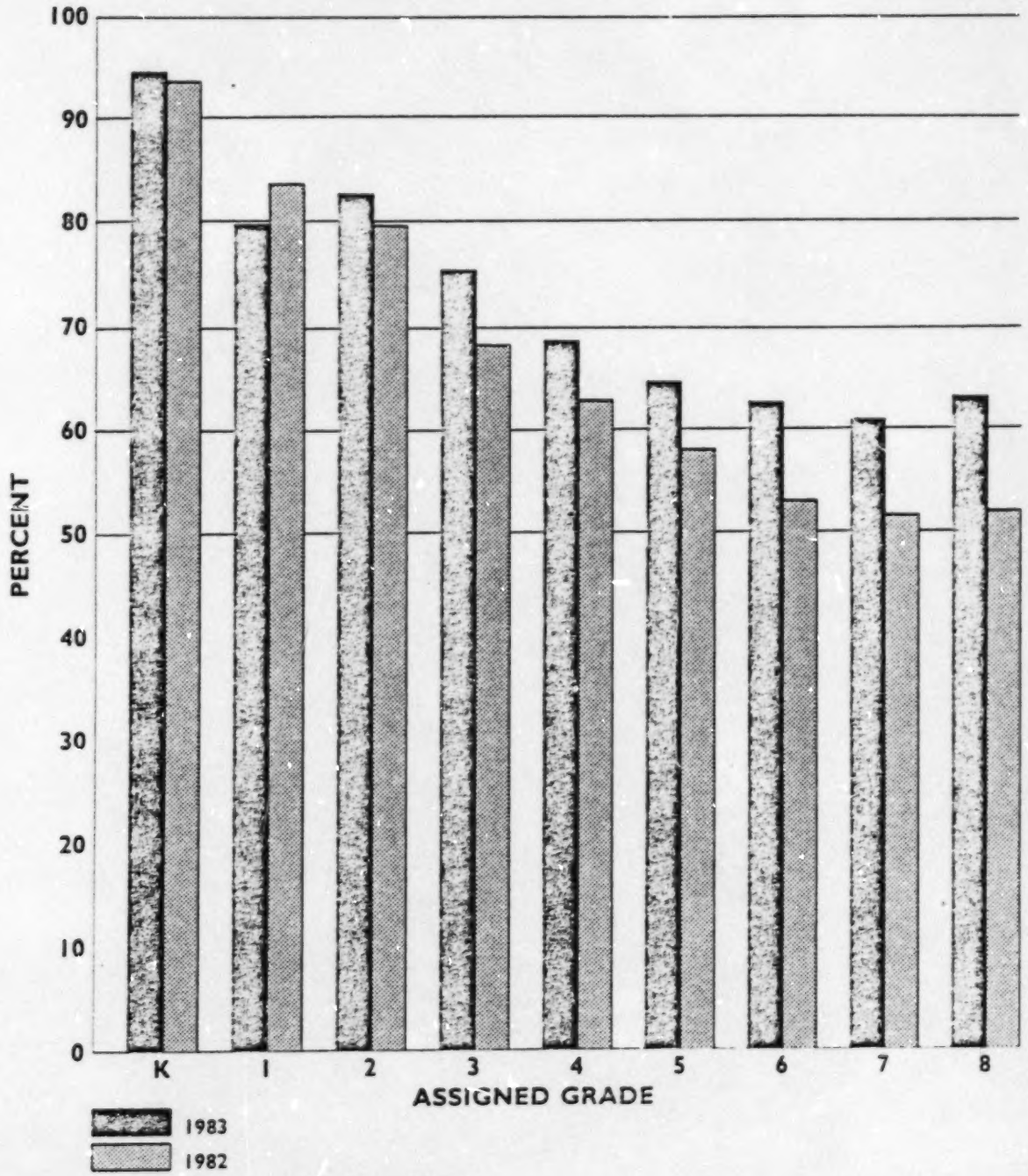
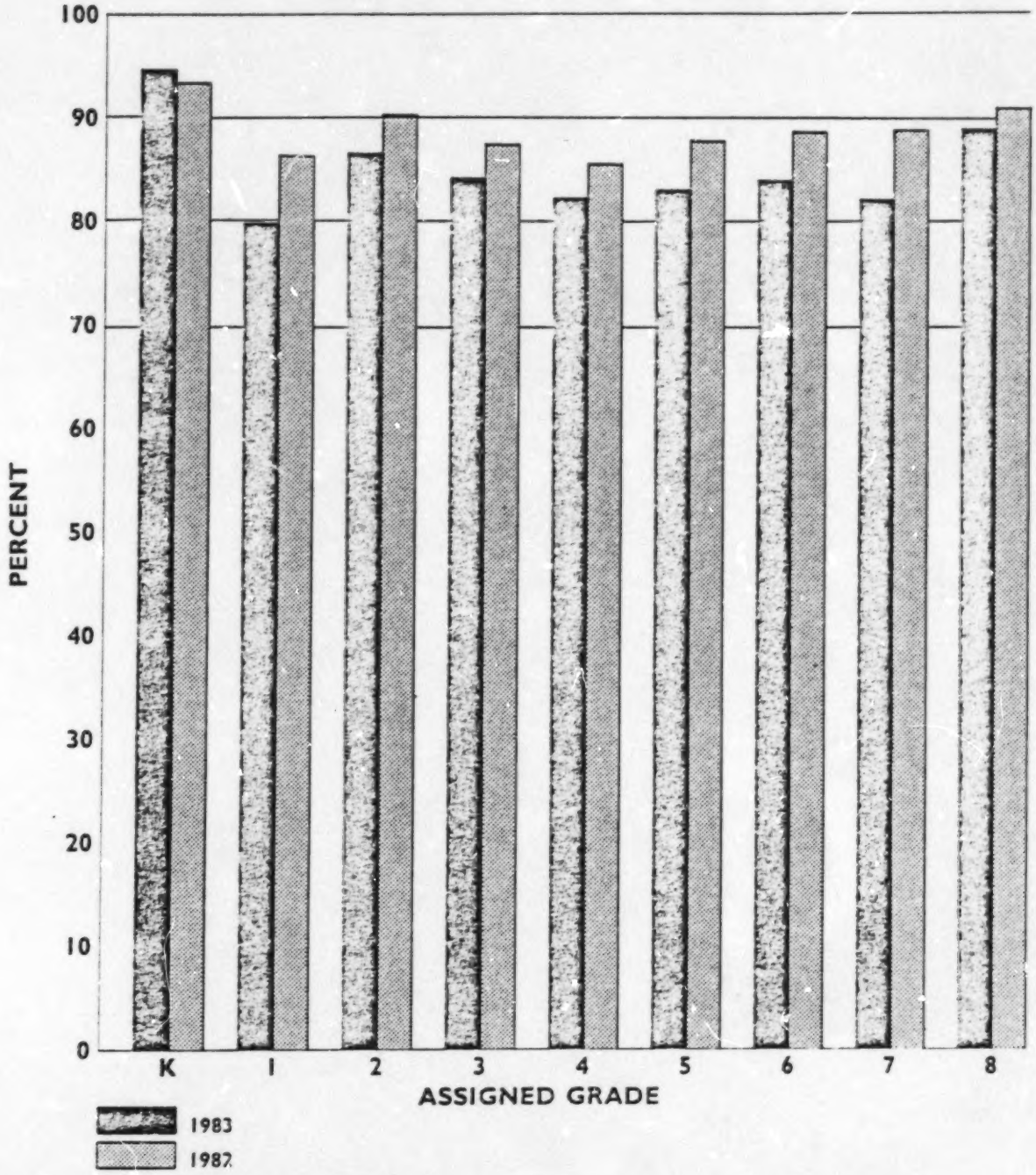


Figure 3

Percent Mastering a Year's Worth of CMLR Materials



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